LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, INC.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2060 N. 14th, Suite 217, Arlington VA 22201 • (703) 524-0698 • FAX (703) 524-0947

Regina F. Narusis, J.D.
President

Vytautas Bieliauskas, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President

K. P. Žygas, Ph.D.
Chair, Public Affairs Council

Ale Kedelis
Chair, Cultural Council

Regina Kudas
Chair, Education Council

Vitolis Vengris
V.P. Academic Affairs

Birute Jasaitis
Chair, Human Services Council
2713 West 71st Street
Chicago, IL 60629
312-436-0197

Algis Rimas
Chair, Economic Affairs Council

Paulius Alsenas
V.P. Organizational Affairs

Rita Likanderis
V.P. Information Services

Sr. Margaret Barzika
Chair, Religious Affairs Council

Dr. Vilija Kerelis
Secretary

Linas Norusis
V.P. - Finance

Ramas Pilipa
Treasurer

Algis Ruginius
V.P. Sports

Victor Kaufmanas
President-Youth Assoc.

Asta Banionis
Director
Public Affairs Office

January 26, 1995

Honorable Warren Christopher
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and its membership throughout the country expresses its deepest concern for Russia's continuing war against the Chechen people. Now that Mr. Yeltsin has announced that the Russian Interior Ministry will begin its "mission to restore law, order and civil rights" in Chechnya, we believe the United States must mobilize the full resources of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to prevent the genocide of the Chechen people.

As Americans we have watched with horror and dismay as our government has tried to justify Russia's immoral war against the people of Chechnya with rationalizations that "It is Russia's internal affair". The echoes of Bush Administration platitudes from 1990 and 1991 readily come to mind when we read of your statements, Mr. Secretary.

The people of Lithuania and the people of Chechnya shared a common tragic fate under Soviet rule in the 1940s - deportations in cattle cars. Both young and old, male and female, they were driven from their homes, from their native land under the guise of sovietization. As the successor state, we had hoped that democratic Russia would be different--but we were wrong. "Soviet" practices still have a firm grip within Russian institutions, most clearly evidenced by the remarks of Col.General Stepashin, Director of Russia's Intelligence Service, "We will use the same methods against the Chechen bandits that the chekisty used against the bandits in the Baltic States."

The presence of OSCE monitors is a necessary first step to protect both the Chechen people and the human rights activists of Russia. But the United States should resolutely move to stop any further lending to Russia by the EBRD, the World Bank and other institutions.

Sincerely,

Prof. K. Paul Zygas, Ph.D.
Chairman, Public Affairs